



Top 10 Black History Nonfiction: 2011

February 1, 2011 (Booklist)

Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry. Ed. by Camille T. Dungy.

By creating an anthology of nature poetry by African American writers, poet and editor Dungy enlarges our understanding of the nexus between nature and culture.

The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama. By David Remnick

Remnick's major contribution to the river of Obama books is a sharply honed work of "biographical journalism" unique in its multiplicity of perspectives, contextual richness, and astute analysis of the president's "political, racial, and sentimental education."

The Grace of Silence. By Michele Norris

This is an investigative family memoir of rare candor and artistry that dramatically reveals essential yet hidden aspects of African American life.

Hellhound on His Trail: The Stalking of Martin Luther King Jr. and the International Hunt for His Assassin. By Hampton Sides

In 1967, an escaped prisoner, drifter, and racist, while voluntarily working on the presidential campaign for George Wallace in California, got the idea of stalking and killing Martin Luther King Jr.

The Last Hero: A Life of Henry Aaron. By Howard Bryant

Bryant delivers a definitive biography of Hall of Famer Aaron, whose reputation only grows as those of such modern-day sluggers as Barry Bonds and Alex Rodriguez become tainted.

My Times in Black and White: Race and Power at the New York Times. By Gerald M. Boyd

Boyd's brilliant career as a journalist, rising from reporter with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* to managing editor of the *New York Times*, will unfortunately be remembered for the Jayson Blair plagiarism scandal in 2003. In this powerful memoir, Boyd recalls his climb from poverty, love of journalism, and thirst for racial equality.

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates. By Wes Moore

In 2000, Wes Moore had recently been named a Rhodes Scholar in his final year of college at Johns Hopkins University when he read a newspaper article about another Wes Moore, who was on his way to prison. It turned out that the two of them had much in common: both were young black men raised in inner-city neighborhoods by single mothers.

Princess Noire: The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone. By Nadine Cohodas

Cohodas provides gripping descriptions of Simone's indelible music along with profoundly moving accounts of her commanding, increasingly militant, and eventually downright bizarre stage presence.

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration. By Isabel Wilkerson

From the early twentieth century through its midpoint, some six million black southerners relocated themselves, their labor, and their lives to the North, a movement analyzed with great insight in this sweeping, stunning book.

Where the Dark and the Light Folks Meet: Race and the Mythology, Politics, and Business of Jazz. By Randall Sandke. Scarecrow

This amateur historian's book, more lucid and straightforward than most professional jazz critic-chroniclers could dream of producing, deserves every history-minded jazz fan's attention.